

Meeting Coventry Fire, Anthony District

Wednesday May 15, 2013

Meeting called to order at 7:05 P.M.

Board members in attendance Gary Cote-chair, Jim Beckman, Peter Pankowicz, Louis Cote, Shirley

Matthews-absent. Also in attendance Chief Labbadia, Deputy Chief Robert Warren, Arthur Capaldi-legal counsel, Tom LaColle-treasurer.

AGENDA:

1) Emergency evacuation procedures.

2) Roll call

3) Approval of the minutes from the meeting held on April 3, 2013.

Louis Cote made a motion to

accept the minutes, seconded by Peter Pankowicz. All in favor, motion carries.

4) Tax office report prepared by Jeanne Lukowicz and read by Gary Cote. Taxes collected to date

\$1,321,620.08. Interest collected to date \$40,958.80. Total tax and interest collected

\$1,362,578.88. Total legal costs collected \$22,184.61. The total monies collected

\$1,384,763.49. There was an error made last month on the percentage of back taxes collected.

It should have been 48% not 61% of back taxes collected. We have collected 58 of back taxes

\$238,850.05. We have collected 48% of the 2013 taxes \$1,082,770.03.

The tax sale is scheduled for August 22, 2013. The second notices went out this week. There was a total of \$21,957.65.

Louis Cote made a motion to accept the tax office report, seconded by Jim Beckman. All in favor, motion carries.

The Chief stated that there was \$2,452.00 in tax bills that were sent out that belonged to another district. Jim Beckman asked why and the Chief said that they showed up on our roll and they need to be taken off. Gary Cote stated that they can be removed from our roll without permission from the Board because they are not legally ours to collect. The Chief said that Jeanne Lukowicz our tax collector wanted to make sure the Board was aware of the situation before anything was removed.

Gary Cote stated that we are on track with 90% - 95% of our budget. Gary Cote mentioned that every month the Board members get an update on the budget and the treasurers report shows that we have spent close to \$140,000.00 in overtime and at this rate the projection is that we will spend \$240,000.00 in overtime this year and only budgeted \$130,000.00. The Chief stated that we have actually spent \$113,000.00 in overtime but the \$56,000.00 from the holidays that were given up by the fire fighters

needs to be put towards the overtime line in the budget. The Chief stated that we adjusted the budget after those holidays were given up and the money is there but under the holiday line item. Gary Cote stated that we did not adjust the budget. Gary Cote said that we went to our annual meeting in December and got a budget approved that was based on a tentative agreement with the union that never happened. Gary Cote also mentioned that the overtime was budgeted as a line item. The Chief said that the overtime was budgeted with a three man minimum and it's a four man minimum, but we did take other things away from the fire fighters to put into that line item to supplement the overtime.

The Chief said that there was around \$90,000.00 to be added to that line item. Gary Cote said that when we go to our annual meeting in December the budget that the tax payers receive will show budgeted \$130,000.00 and actual \$240,000.00 and that is going to have to be explained. Gary Cote said that he is trying to avoid any issues like in the CCFD and not being able to get a budget approved due to overtime cost. The Chief said the \$56,000.00 should be put into the overtime line like was discussed six months ago. Tom LaColle said that we will be over on one line item

and be under on another. Gary

Cote said that every line item is going to be skewed and wants everything explained to the tax payers.

Tom LaColle said that at the annual meeting we will have to explain to the taxpayers that we over spent

on overtime but didn't spend any money on holidays. The Chief said that they are paying more for Blue

Cross and less for their PEHP and that extra is being used for overtime because of the four man

minimum. Gary Cote said that that line is still going to be over and doesn't want any problems like

CCFD. Tom La Colle said that everything will be explained at the annual meeting. The Chief said it is not

that we under budgeted it is that the contract changed and some line items changed. Gary Cote said

that when the treasurer's report comes out he takes it as an informative warning about overtime being

an issue. Gary Cote said that if the \$56,000.00 and anything that needs to be added to the overtime

line item should be added and the money would be there to supplement that line item. Tom LaColle

said that in his opinion negotiations should be finalized before the budget is submitted. The Chief and

Jim Beckman agreed. Jim Beckman stated that since the contract wasn't signed they should have

passed the full budget with no concessions. Gary Cote said you may

not have had the budget passed
and that could put this district into liquidation just like Central
because we don't have the right to revert
back to the previous budget. Jim Beckman said that there is a thirty
day window for formal negotiations
and if it is not done in that window it's over. Informal negotiations are
a different story. Tom LaColle
mentioned that all budgets have their up and downs. The Chief said
that he put across a budget and it
was up to the Board to change the things they wanted changed. Jim
Beckman said he wanted to pass
the budget with no concessions which would have raised taxes but
not everyone wanted that to
happen. Jim Beckman said that he can see Gary Cote's point about
the taxpayers seeing that line item
and being shocked. The Chief said that will have to be explained at
the annual meeting. Gary Cote
stated that he is trying to avoid any issues that could put us in the
same situation as Central. Gary Cote
said that line item for overtime needs to have all the money that is
going to be used for that line put into
that line. The Chief said he thought it should stay the way it is and
address it at the annual meeting in
his presentation to the tax payers and explain where the money came
from to pay the overtime. Gary
Cote said that if there was money in the budget that needed to be

appropriated to the overtime line it has to be changed to reflect those changes. Jim Beckman said that the Chief couldn't have explained that at the annual meeting because those changes hadn't taken place yet. Tom LaColle mentioned that every budget has an over and under. Jim Beckman said that he understands that you can't predict storms, overtime or other contingencies and you can't put that in as a line item. The Chief said that the tax payers voted on the overall budget and that the changes with contract happened after. Gary Cote agreed that we did not get a vote by each line item. We got approval on the overall budget and as a Board for the district we have the fiduciary responsibility to make sure that we appropriate the money to the correct line item. Gary Cote said so if that means moving money to that line item and show where that money came from that is what has to be done. Tom LaColle said the budget could be changed to show where the money came from and it won't change the bottom line. Gary Cote asked

Arthur Capaldi if we had gotten approval line item by line item. Arthur Capaldi said it was explained line item by line item but voted on as an overall budget. Gary Cote just wanted everything to be clear when

we go to the annual meeting in December. The Chief said that we would change that line item. Tom LaColle said that the Chief did explain everything line by line at the annual meeting in his presentation and maybe it was voted on as an overall budget, but if someone says I thought we only approved \$130,000.00 in overtime you will still need to explain what happened. Gary Cote said that he understands that but the taxpayer will be looking at the budget that has a budgeted and an actual and the numbers will be closer to what was actually done. Jim Beckman mentioned that the fire hydrants in Providence had an increase of 46% this year. The Chief said that we already pay \$420.00 per hydrant. Gary Cote said the developer purchases the hydrants from Providence Water or Kent County Water and as soon as the water goes through the hydrant Kent County Water owns them and we have to rent them. Gary Cote said that increase has to go through the Public Utilities Commission. Jim Beckman said that Providence has already gone through the PUC and it's only a matter of time. The Chief said the hydrant rental would go to \$210,000.00 from \$120,000.00. Gary Cote said that there would be no executive session tonight because the meeting was not posted correctly. The agenda said executive session personnel but there

must also be a section and a sub section listed. Arthur Capaldi stated that the executive session would have to be held at the next meeting. Gary Cote said that he would get the section and sub section to the Chief to post on the agenda for next month. The Chief said he has them but only put on the agenda what he was told to.

The Chief said one case was filed for arbitration and there is a very short window to work with. Gary

Cote said that case could not be discussed in executive section unless that person was notified 48 hours

in advance in writing and the person given the option of having his case heard in an open meeting or

executive section. Gary Cote said that he attends every open meeting forum put on by the Secretary of

State and the Attorney General's office in regards to open meetings, public meetings and public records.

PUBLIC COMMENT:

A taxpayer asked if the hydrants get turned off if not paid. The Chief said there is a state law that they

can't be turned off. Jim Beckman said they do shut the majority down but they have to keep some on and working.

A tax payer asked when we vote on the final budget. Gary Cote said our annual meeting is in December

and that is when we vote on the budget.

Louis Cote made a motion to adjourn the meeting, seconded by Peter Pankowicz. All in favor. Motion carries. Meeting adjourned at 7:25 P.M.

Respectfully submitted

Mary Perry